

*Vivat Cor Jesu in Cordibus Hominum*

# *St. Augustine's* *Christmas Messenger* 1923

Vol I

St. Augustine's Mission House, Bay St. Louis, Miss. No. 1

## Opening of St. Augustine's Mission House

BAY ST. LOUIS, MISSISSIPPI.

At last! The dream of many has been realized; the prayers of the good priests working in the colored field has been heard; a great need has been supplied; a golden page, in the history of the Negro people in this country has been turned; a seminary for the purpose of training Colored boys for the dignity of the holy priesthood has been established. And no one need to fear that this institution might fail; it had already for some years past, annually, a normal increase in the number of students and a large percentage of the first students persevered; it is now sheltered in a permanent and modern home; it enjoys the unhesitating and full approbation of the American Hierarchy as well as that of our Holy Father who sent an autographed letter with his papal blessing for the occasion of the opening of St. Augustine's Mission House, the new home for the seminary.

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### St. Augustine's Mission House and Grounds at St. Augustine.

For the past three years the seminary was temporarily stationed at Greenville, Miss., until the funds, property, and buildings could be obtained for a permanent home. The present St. Augustine's Mission House, located at Bay St. Louis, is the realization of many prayers, desires and labors. The site of twenty-seven acres chosen for the erection of the new Mission House, is ideal owing to its seclusive location, which makes it a model retreat for the boys pursuing a religious vocation. It is in the midst of a small yet thriving Catholic community and enjoys the bracing atmosphere of the breezy Bay St. Louis. The Mission House itself is an imposing three-story brick structure with well lighted and ventilated class rooms, steam heating, modern fire protection, sanitary bathing accommodations, a spacious chapel and dormitories. Nearby is the Rectory, formerly a delapidated homestead, but now remodeled into a cozy resting place for the priests. At a convenient distance are the brothers quarters, kitchen, laundry, and dining room, all either ~~new~~ or remodeled. The dining hall bears the inscription, "St. Peter Claver's Hall", because the funds were given by the Knights of Peter Claver.

The institution at large is situated on very beautiful grounds, dotted with majestic oaks, tall healthy pines, dwarfed cedars, beautiful magnolias, graceful palms and an abundance of fruit trees.

Among the benefactors who made this beautiful structure possible, must be mentioned the Archbishops and Bishops of this country, who allowed a generous appropriation out of the funds for Indian and Negro Missions for the purpose of the new seminary. Very Rev. Father E. R. Dyer, secretary and treasurer of the board for the distribution of these funds, a most ardent advocate of a Colored priesthood, and Mother Katherine Drezel, who had already in Greenville, extended to us a helping hand.

The grounds for St. Augustine's Mission House were broken Sept. 26, 1922. The laying of the corner stone took place Nov. 23, 1922, by the Rt. Rev. John E. Gunn, Bishop of Natchez. The marble slab used for the purpose came from the catacombs of Rome. The contractor completed the building in June, 1923.

## DEDICATION

In the presence of an immense throng of benefactors and friends, the Rt. Rev. John E. Gunn, Bishop of Natchez, assisted by Rev. P. T. Janser, Provincial of the Society of the Divine Word and many visiting priests, with solemn and impressive ceremonies blessed the new Mission House (Sept. 16). This event marks a momentous epoch, not only of the colored people, but of the Catholic Church of America, as it is the first undertaking of its kind exclusively for the Colored race. The Colored Catholics of the South rose to the importance of the day. To celebrate the great event worthily, they came in large numbers from New Orleans, and many other points of Louisiana, Mississippi, even Texas. The Knights of Peter Claver attended in a body. The Supreme Knight, Mr. Gilbert Faustina, came with a group of Knights from Alabama, the members of the Corpus Christi Counsel attended in their official regalia, spotless white uniforms; the large representation of the other New Orleans Councils were led by their respective brass bands. When they arrived in Bay St. Louis, they were met by the Grand Knight, the brass band, and the members of the Bay St. Louis Council. In regular parade formation, that splendid body of Colored men marched through the business section of the town up to St. Augustine grounds.

Following the dedicatory ceremonies, Solemn High Mass, with Father P. T. Janser, S. V. D. Provincial as celebrant, Fr. Wolf, S. V. D. Superior of Southern Missions, and Fr. McConnel, S. S. J. as assistants, was held in the open air. The seminary choir sang the Mass which was composed and directed by Father Baltes. Father Kane, S. S. J., of New Orleans, preached an eloquent sermon.

Among other visiting priests present were: Very Rev. A. J. Leech, Chancellor of the Diocese; Very Rev. A. Gmelch, pastor of Bay St. Louis; Very Rev. Canon Korstenbrock, Rev. A. Fitzpatrick, S. S. J. of Biloxi, Miss., and Rev. H. Sweeney, S. S. J. of Pass Christian, Miss. The religious orders present: School Brothers of the Sacred Heart, and Sisters of St. Joseph, Blessed Sacrament, and Holy Ghost.

The fourth year of the institution was started soon after the dedication with an enrollment of twenty-two students. Four Fathers compose the faculty. There are two brothers to do the manual work.



## Buildings and Grounds of St. Augustine.

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The institution at large is situated on very beautiful grounds dotted with majestic oaks, tall healthy pines, with a few beautiful magnolias, graceful palms and an abundance of flowering shrubs.

Among the benefactors who made this home tract possible, must be mentioned the Archbishops and Bishops of the country, who allowed a generous appropriation for the Indian and Negro Missions from the treasury of the Holy See. Very Rev. Father E. R. Dyer, secretary and treasurer, and for the distribution of these funds a most generous and efficient Colored priesthood, and Mother Katherine Dwyer, who in Greenville, extended to us a helping hand.

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### NEEDS OF ST. AUGUSTINE.

Although the seminary is progressing rapidly, it is in need of many things. The most urgent are:

1. Free Scholarships, \$5,000.00 each.
2. Contribution to complete incompletd burses of which we have two.
3. Donations of \$25.00 a month or \$250.00 a year to support a student for a month or a year.
4. Smaller donations of \$1.00, \$5.00 or \$10.00 to help support poor students for whom there is no free scholarship, yet neither a benefactor willing to pay his whole board.
5. Contributions which you promised in Thanksgiving for some favor obtained, or prayers heard; for Vigil lights; \$1.00 will burn them six days, \$5.00 a whole month.
6. Sacred vestments, altar linen, furniture for the auditorium which is bare, clothing for poor students and books for the students' library.